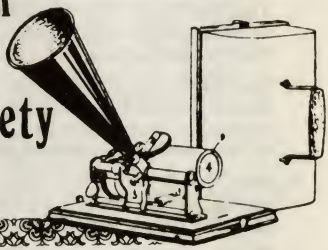
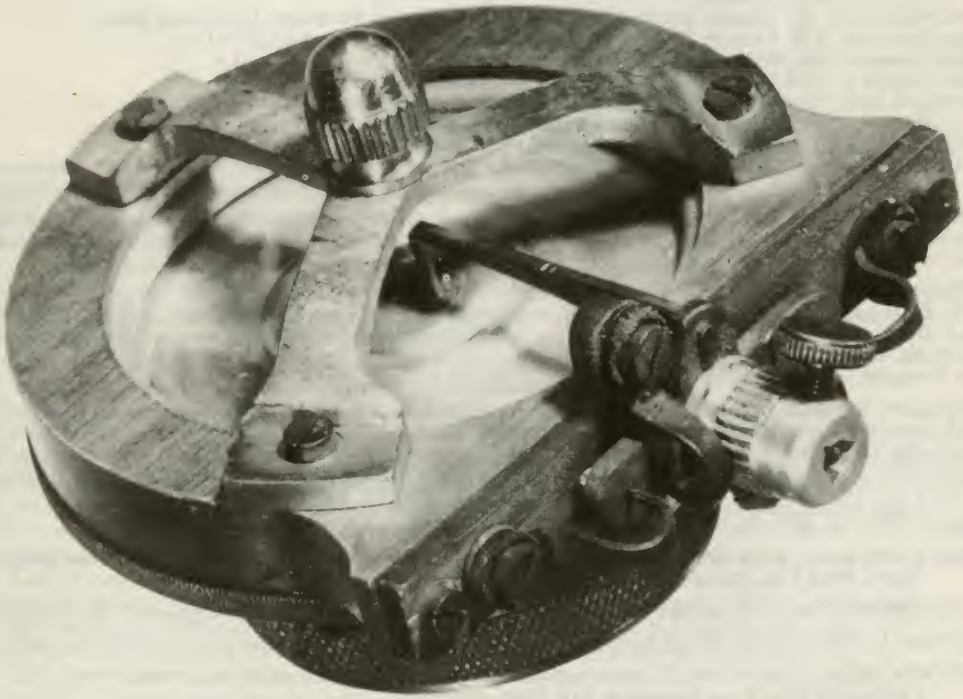
The Hillandale News

The official journal of
The City of London
Phonograph and
Gramophone Society
Inaugurated 1919



NO. 106 FEBRUARY 1979



SOCIETY RULES

1. That the Society shall be called THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH & GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY, and that its objects shall be the social intercourse of its members, as well as the scientific and musical study of sound reproducing apparatus, as well as its application.
2. That the Officers of the Society shall consist of a President, Vice President, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Financial Treasurer and Meetings Secretary, who shall be elected at each Annual General Meeting in October, and who shall be ex-officio members of the Committee.
3. That the management of the Society be vested in a Committee, similarly elected at each Annual General Meeting, and with power to co-opt, and that its duties shall be the carrying into effect of these rules and objects. Written notice must be given to the Secretary one clear month before an Annual General Meeting of any resolution proposing to amend these rules.
4. New members (ladies or gentlemen) may be elected on the nomination of any existing member, at any meeting of the Society on the payment of an annual subscription to be approved at the Annual General Meeting, which is renewable twelve calendar months thereafter.
5. The financial Treasurer shall, once in every year, submit a statement of Accounts of the Society to an Auditor elected by the Society and shall furnish a Balance Sheet for the financial year ending October for the inspection of members at each Annual General Meeting.

President: George Frow, [redacted] Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3SH
Vice-Presidents: James F. Dennis, R.C.S.,
A.D. Besford
Chairman/Editor: Christopher Proudfoot, [redacted] Meopham, Gravesend, Kent.
Vice-Chairman: D.R. Roberts, [redacted] Pyrford, Woking, Surrey GU22 8TN.
Hon. Treasurer: B.A. Williamson, [redacted] Liverpool, L16 1LA.
Hon. Secretary: John McKeown, [redacted] St. James's, London, SW1Y 6PZ.
Archivist: John Carreck, [redacted] Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5 DX.
Hon. Members: Ernie Bayly, Dennis Harbur, George Frow, Len Watts.
Committee: B. Raynaud, F. Andrews, Len Watts.
Publisher: Bill Brott, [redacted] West Finchley, London N3 1PG.

TREASURER'S NOTES: In future, would members please send all monies in Sterling (cheques, Postal Orders, etc.) direct to the Treasurer, *together with all orders for goods,* as this will simplify our accounting system, and avoid double handling.

MEMBERSHIP RATES:

U.K. & Europe	£4.00 per year	U.S.A. & Canada	$8.00 Surface Mail
New Zealand Airmail	£5.00 per year		$10.00 Airmail
Australia, Japan, etc. (now payable directly to the Treasurer, as bulk subscription has ceased)	£5.00 per year		

Overseas members are requested to send STERLING DRAFTS or banknotes, as check clearances here carry a high commission rate. The Society no longer operates within the Post Office Giro system. New Zealand and Australian Postal Orders are acceptable in the U.K. To save postage in mailing receipts, these are sent out with the goods or next magazine to members. PLEASE MAKE OUT ALL CHECKS AND DRAFTS PAYABLE TO "THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY".

HEREFORD. Details from the Secretary, D.G. Watson, [redacted] Tupsley, Hereford.

MIDLANDS. Details from the Secretary, P. Bennett, [redacted] Wolverhampton, Staffs, WV4 5DE. Phone: [redacted]

MANCHESTER. Details from the Secretary, Ernest Wild, [redacted] Uppermill, Oldham OL3 6EB

VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA. Details from C. Gracie, [redacted] Cavendish, Victoria 3408, Australia.

MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE that all money should now be sent to our Treasurer, B.A. Williamson, [redacted] Liverpool, L16 1LA.

Vice Chairman's Chat

As the Chairman is allowed half a page for chit chat I assume it follows that as newly elected Vice-Chairman, I am entitled to a quarter page.

First, I feel honoured that I have been elected but have not earned my position when I think about what my predecessor, the late Goodwin Ive did for the society.

My interests vary slightly with those of the Chairman, who can tell you everything you wish to know about an HMV 102k or g or l. He will tell you when it was tested, by whom and what he had for lunch by the grease stains on the soundbox. I am not so well informed and have to rely on what others tell me about the machines I own. I also have a leaning toward the cylinder machines in preference to disc machines although my collection has about equal proportions. My great interest at the moment is trying to organise programmes etc., which is why I handle the Almanac and arrange the London programmes and speakers. This brings me onto my next paragraph.

It is very difficult to keep issuing an interesting and varied Almanac if you, the readers, do not send me details of what happens in your area, I have heard of a couple of events when it has been too late to enter them into the Almanac. If you want to meet other members at the various fleamarket, auction, village fete, or meeting, you should let me know and I can let everybody know. Write to me at Debenhams Ltd., [redacted] London WIA IEF for the attention of the House Manager.

Chairman's Chat

I can't think of anything to chat about just at the moment, but I have some photographs to hand of E.M.G. and other hand-made soundboxes, and will therefore make a few comments on them. I have not as yet done any deep research into the chronology of E.M. Ginn's activities in the gramophone market, but these photographs at least show the progression from the early soundboxes, based on the Exhibition, to those of the typical E.M.G. and Expert machines of the 1930s.

The development of custom-made gramophones, designed to produce the best possible sound without regard to appearance, was an interesting phenomenon of the latter 1920s, and seems to have been peculiar to this country. It was encouraged particularly by *The Gramophone,* founded by Compton Mackenzie in 1923. The following year saw Ginn's first machine, the Magnaphone, which was very shortly re-named the E.M.G. Handmade Gramophone. This was largely the work of Henry Seymour, and from illustrations (I have yet to meet one in the flesh) it is hard to see how it differed from the well-established Seymour Superphone. It was a cabinet model with a circular vulcanite internal horn.

Over the next few years, the E.M.G. slowly evolved, acquiring a new soundbox, each one being specially tuned for its machine and the type of record and needle that were to be used with it, as well as a new goose-neck tone-arm with an adjusting device in the 'dead end'. In 1927 these were allied to the Wilson Panharmonic horn, a straight papier-mache production designed by Percy Wilson at the request of *The Gramophone's* Expert Committee and made by a South London firm. This was the first gramophone offered on the market with the Wilson horn as standard equipment.

Fig 1 shows an un-named soundbox which is constructed of brass with a plain satin finish; the body, tone-arm mounting and stylus-bar are almost identical to the Exhibition, but already certain E.M.G. characteristics are present. These are the aluminium diaphragm, the pointed hook-shaped stylus-bar springs and the rubber washers on the screws attaching the body to the back-plate, which provide for tuning by adjusting gasket compression (and also the distance between the diaphragm and the backplate.) The protective bar on the front was probably added at the customer's request, possibly some time after the original sale-date. It is worth recalling that E.M.G. owners regularly sent their soundboxes back to be re-tuned and adjusted.

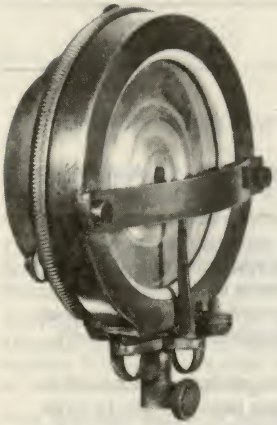


Fig 1

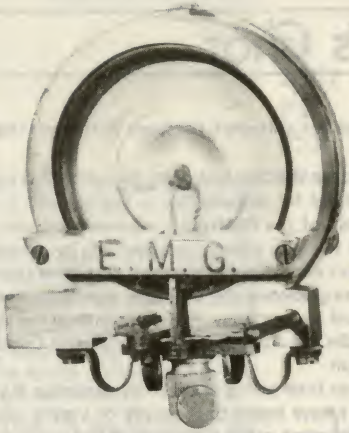


Fig 2

Fig 3

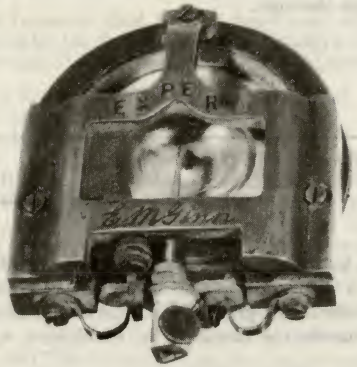


Fig 4

Fig 5

A later version has the aluminium needle-holder familiar to most E.M.G. owners, but more interesting is the new position of the stylus-bar springs. They are mounted at each end of the pressure-plate, the points coming directly over the knife-edge fulcrum. In the old design, the points just over-reached the fulcrum, so that although each counterbalanced the other and brought the diaphragm back to its mean position, they were always adding extra 'recovery' power to the diaphragm whether it was required or not. They could not be slackened off or removed, as they held the stylus bar in place. With the 'End-on' arrangement, the spring-points still hold the stylus-bar on to the soundbox, but will give hardly any recovery assistance at all if centred over the fulcrum point. If some tension is required, however, they can be rotated slightly to bring the point forwards or backwards from the fulcrum point.

On the heavier (and more expensive) E.M.G. soundboxes, such as are normally found on the Mark X range, the fore and aft springs were retained in addition to the new end-on variety: now, however, they performed merely an auxiliary role, to assist disphragm recovery without having to hold the stylus-bar in place. Possibly, it was found that this assistance was needed to counter-balance the effect of the increased (and not inconsiderable) weight of these boxes. An early example of the four-spring type is shown in Fig. 2. The more familiar version, in use throughout the 1930s, is that shown on the front cover.

The two-spring E.M.G. soundbox became much more streamlined in appearance in the 1930s, and the springs were simplified to an L shape by mounting them on abutments on the body. (Fig. 3). Like many of the later E.M.G. soundboxes, this is polished and nickel-plated.

In 1930, E.M. Ginn left E.M.G. and started another, similar firm under the cumbersome title E.M. Ginn Expert Handmade Gramophones. With David Phillips, who had also come from the old firm, he was soon producing a modified version of the E.M.G. machines, but the soundbox, although of slightly different shape and, if anything, even heavier and clumsier, was technically the same (Fig. 4) A two-spring version was also made, which was of similar shape but had a simple cross-bar in place of the heavy mask. Expert soundboxes nearly always have the rough, hand-made look of the early E.M.G.s, although as their machines were custom-built it is likely that a few would have been more highly finished to special order.

Finally, (Fig. 5) we show another custom-made soundbox, from a maker who seems almost unknown today. This was H. Virtz, who advertised his hand-tuned soundboxes and pedestal gramophones throughout the latter 1920s. Like E.M.G. and Expert, he dealt directly with the customer, and his soundboxes were tuned not only for the type of needle but also the type of music. This example has the word 'orchestra' scratched into the backplate behind the diaphragm. It would perhaps have been more helpful to write it on the outside.

Fig 6 is a back view of (3) showing the typical EMG/Expert tone-arm fixing, consisting of a thick rubber ring with a knurled compression nut.

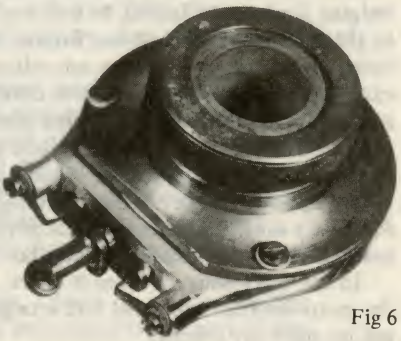


Fig 6

People, Paper and Things

BY GEORGE FROW

The first day or so after Christmas is something of an anti-climax after the build-up and buoyancy which precedes the 25th. In the Northern Hemisphere we have got the shortest day behind us, and although January and February may be snowy and frosty, there's a feeling of being on the right side of winter. Festive cards — particularly from collectors — seemed more ingenious than ever this year, and may I take the opportunity on behalf of the other Society officers and myself to thank all those who sent cards, many of great originality, and thank you all for the kind thought.

On B.B.C. Radio 3, Melvin Harris has presented a new series of programmes on his pet subject, wind instruments; the first was on November 25th on the bassoon, and among many vintage discs he included two cylinders, the Edison 2-minute "Nightingale and the Frog" and the Victorian favourite "The Bassoon", sung by Albert Whelan.

An Illinois correspondent, John Fesler, draws attention to The Payer Cylindrical Phonograph Record Co., Ltd., P.O. Box R., Willimantic, Ct. 06226, United States, who are making cylinder records, re-recorded from originals of Edison cylinders and discs, and are offering these on 2-minute, 4-minute and Concert (5 inch) size. There are those who find it hard to scrape the time to playing original old-fashioned cylinders, but in case a list is required that of July 1978 costs S1.50. There are also 2 and 4-minute Grand Opera records to charm the ear, and prices are from S5 to S9 for standard sizes, and S12 to S15 for the big 'uns.

Several editions back I happened to mention reading in THE GRAMOPHONE magazine of the later twenties of a possibly earlier Victor recording that might be electrical, earlier than previously suspected, that is, this being 19586 (H.M.V. B 2038). Paul Charosh of New York State writes that he has known this recording through the years as a collector, and that it is an acoustic recording in all the copies he has come across. The side in question is "Oh Katherina! ", a German-American song performed by Arthur Hall, who expresses love for an over-weight Katherina, but whom he would love more, were she leaner. This was from "Chauvre Souris", and perhaps also 'chacun a son gout', and grateful thanks to Paul Charosh for clearing up a nice point.

The May 1977 HI-FI ANSWERS, published in the U.K., has driven Jacques Francois of the Belgian Embassy, Madrid, to write and send a photostat of one of the pages, and one is driven to think that this sort of stuff must have been scratched together by the office cat. Apart from being presented in a jejeune schoolboy style, its compiler whose name does not appear on the excerpt sent, could at least have cribbed from Reed and Welch, Chew and Gellatt with some sort of accuracy. A photographic plate has confused my correspondent, and no wonder at this, as the Edison Bell GEM is described as being from the Edison's 1908 range while the poor common PUCK is captioned "cheap and cheerful at 7s. 6d., Edison's 1908 '20th Century' model cylinder player". Disregarding the obvious bloomers, one may well cry "why 1908 for Pete's sake?" One meets folk genuinely misled by the patent numbers on Edison and other machines, but it's usually a date like 1903 that comes up.

In the next issue, if there is space, I hope to write at short length about Karl Reich of Bremen, the bird specialist and a neglected character in these days when nearly any twit can get its voice on record.

Word has just come through of the death of Dr. Norman Spieden just before Christmas, while driving his car. He was for many years Curator at the Edison Laboratory Site, and will be remembered by those who enquired after information a long long time ago as a helpful and kindly correspondent. He was about to get a number of projects under way for preserving and organising Edison memorabilia, and will be much missed by all who came in contact with him.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

A book is in early preparation on the history and styles of the Edison Disc Phonographs. If there are Members owning or having access to certain models, eg: The Consolette, the late radiophonographs, any of the un-catalogued styles, or unusual accessories, I would be grateful if they would get in touch with me. All letters answered. George L. Frow, [redacted] Sevenoaks, Kent, England, TN13 3SH.

AUDITOR REQUIRED

Following the resignation of Arthur Close as our honorary Auditor, as announced in the December *Hillandale News*, we seek a new auditor. Any member with suitable accountancy qualifications who would be willing to offer his or her services is invited to write to the Chairman or the Treasurer. The task consists of checking the accounts once a year, before the Annual General Meeting.

The November Meeting at the Bloomsbury Institute

BY LONDON REPORTER

This meeting was devoted to the history of the John Bull Records, recounted by Frank Andrews assisted (not for the first time) by Len Watts with his slide-projector. Frank has asked that the full story of John Bull be not put into print yet, as it is to form the Foreword of a proposed comprehensive list of John Bull records. It is a story which was entirely new to those at the meeting.

Without disclosing too many details, it appears that the records were the property of three British-registered companies before passing to a German-based concern and then being sold to another British firm which had been organised by Carl Lindstrom of Berlin. The label disappeared at this stage, existing stocks being over-labelled by the acquiring company.

Some of the records were manufactured in this country, but the majority were made by Beka and Favorite in Germany. Some other, less familiar, German companies were also mentioned, such as the Schallplatten Mass Fabrik, Max Thomas, Aga, Bel Canto and Grunbaum & Thomas.

The companies' peculiar style of trading in John Bull records, a form of doorstep-selling, was covered at length, and we learnt that Ercophone machines were involved as part of the normal deal.

The story was interspersed with playings of John Bull Records or recordings on other labels which were at some time also issued under the John Bull banner. These were: Albert Muller, Boulanger March (bells); Kenneth McKenzie, I Love a Lassie; Careless Cuckoos, barn dance, John Bull Orchestra (actually the Beka London Orchestra, conducted by Julien Jones of the London Hippodrome); Albert Franselle, Sylvia (piccolo); Philip Ritte, Because (played from a Parlophone pressing of fourteen years later); Harry Trevor, Redwing; Gold & Silver Waltz, played by John Bull Military Band (actually recorded by the Earl of Lonsdale's Private Military Band, probably conducted by Eli Hudson); Garde Republicaine Band, Poet & Peasant Overture; Jose Gomez, La Paloma (violin).

The last three records, from Dacapo matrices, were: Professor A. Fishburg, violinist, 'of London', Paderewski's Minuet (he was 'of St Petersburg' in the Dacapo catalogue); Johnnie Black, Ein, Zwei, Drei; and Billy Williams, I Must Go Home Tonight.

The December Meeting at the Bloomsbury Institute

HELD ON DECEMBER 6TH 1978

This meeting began somewhat inauspiciously when it was found that a vital plug was missing from the disc-playing equipment (because the lead to which it was attached bad been found at the previous meeting to require a new plug at the other end, and this lead, presumably now 'plugged' at both ends, had not been returned!). Fortunately, Gordon Bromly proved himself

once again to be an Angel ministering to those in distress, and produced some very sophisticated machinery for us, while John McKeown went off in a cab to get a pick-up for it. In the meantime, we played cylinders on Dave Roberts' Fireside. The theme of the programme was 'Christmas on Cylinder and Disc', and members had been invited to bring something festive with them.

We had a good selection of cylinders, even though there were at least three duplicated titles (for which Dave, had he expected them, might have brought two phonographs and played them by his pseudo-stereo system). One cylinder, chosen because of its title, 'Snow Deer', was straight from a Wild West story. By contrast, we had Comfort Ye, My People (Reed Miller), The Miner's Dream of Home (Dawson), The Street Watchman's Christmas (Bransby Williams), Old Jim's Christmas Hymn (Campbell & Harrison), Christmas Greetings March (Edison Concert Band) and Christmas Memories (R. Gaylor).

After the cylinders, we stopped for a breath and a most welcome cup of tea provided by Mrs Bromly. We then moved on to the disc records, the equipment being now ready to suit all comers. We began with that well-known parody of 'Scenes that are Brightest,' 'Jolly Old Christmas' (Leslie Sarony) and followed this with: A Fine Old English Gentleman, Santa Claus at the Bugginses, Adeste Fideles (Associated Glee Clubs of America, Columbia's pioneer electrical recording of March 1925), White Christmas (no prizes for guessing the artist, but did you know this was the B side of the record?), Columbia on Parade (a sort of pantomime by eleven regular Columbia artists), Does Santa Sleep with his Whiskers over or under his Chin? (Jack Jackson et al.), The Parson's Christmas Address (Vivian Foster), Silent Night (Heddle Nash et al.), Gert and Daisy (mixing the Christmas pud) and finally Caruso and Melba singing *O suave fanciulla* from La Boheme.

Presenters were C. Proudfoot, D. Roberts, P. Martland, J. McKeown, T. Woolley, F. Andrews, B. Raynaud, G. Frow, G. Edwards, R. Caton, G. Bromly (who operated his disc-playing machine and winced at the quality of some of the records he had to put under the stylus) and anyone else I may have forgotten to mention.

London Reporter

Beginning of Talking Machine and Record Industries in Japan

TORU FUNAHASHI, OSAKA, JAPAN

It is my pleasure to introduce this report, which has never been seen even in Japanese in Japan. The difficulties to reach this result were caused mainly from the following reasons:

1) Originally domestic literature was too poor in quantity and the quality, and a large part left was lost in W.W.II and the confusion after the War.

2) We feel our ancestors were too busy to absorb Western knowledge & technology and to record domestic affairs even in their own language. Also foreign historians & students would be restricted in investigating this area in Japan because of language barriers. These will be the reasons we can not always find domestic affairs in foreign literature.

3) Present scholars at universities and colleges here as well as historians, etc. seem to have no intention of investigating this field in the near future, though I know many of them.

These are the reasons which led me to study this history. But a report of this kind cannot be perfect or the best for ever, and repeated correction or addition will be necessary, I think.

To make the understanding for readers easy, I will briefly list as below. Inside of each (' ') is a proper noun named by the establisher, but inside of each ( ) equivalents to English written for the convenience of the readers, not proper noun. The word, *gramophone* in this article exclusively shows disc machine for lateral-cut; machines for vertical-cut & both-cut are not included. No.

1907: **Nichibei Chikuonki Seizo Kabushiki-kaisha** (1)
('Japan-American Phonograph Mfg. Co., Ltd.')
Head Office: Kawasaki Town, Kanagawa Prefecture
Products: a) Gramophone
b) Discs: Symphony, Royal, Globe, American & Universal (label names)
Fate: In 1910 Nihon Chikuonki Shokai (No. 2) merged this.

1910: **Nihon Chikuonki Shokai** (Japan Gramophone & Co.') (2)
Head Office: Tokyo City
Products: a) Gramophones with morning glory horn called Nipponophone 50, 35, 32.5 & 25 (see Photo No. 1)
b) Hornless gramophones: Euphone No. 1 (see Photo No. 2), Euphone No. 2 (see Photo No. 3) & Euphone New No. 2, Nipponola & Nipponola Grand, Unique & Momotaro (toy, see Photo No. 4)
c) Discs: Nipponophone Record, 5 kinds took over from above, and in 1919 merged Orient Record (see No. 8)
Fate: In 1928 reorganized as Columbia Graphophone Co., of Japan, Ltd. (see No. 18)

Fig 1 Nipponophone 25

Fig 2 Euphone No. 1

Fig 3 Euphone No. 2

Fig 4 Momotaro, toy

1912: **Nisshin Chikuonki Kabushiki-kaisha** (Sino-Japanese Gramophone Co., Ltd.) (3)
Head Office: Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture
Products Gramophone & Records (short lived & details unknown)
Fate: Bankrupt in Nov. 1917
Osaka Chikuonki Kabushiki-kaisha (Osaka Gramophone Co., Ltd.) (4)
Head Office: Osaka City
Products: a) Gramophone & Accessories
b) Disc: National Record
Fate: In 1919 merged into No. 8

1913: **Tokyo Chikuonki Kabushiki-kaisha** (Tokyo Gramophone Co., Ltd.) (5)
Head Office: Tokyo City
Products: Tokyo Record (others unknown)
Fate: In 1925 combined as Godo Chikuonki Kabishiki-kaisha (see No. 16)
Yamato Onei Kabushiki-kaisha (Yamato Record Co., Ltd.) (6)
Head Office: Tokyo City
Products: mostly disc for movie (early talkie), then exclusively movie film production
Fate: unknown
Nihon Kinetohon Kabushiki-kaisha (Japan Kinetophone Co., Ltd.) (7)
Head Office: Tokyo City
Businesses: a) Importation of Edison Kinetoscope & the Accessories
b) Domestic production of above item
c) Adapting above items for entertainment
Fate: till ca. 1919

1914: **Toyo Chikuonki Kabushiki-kaisha** ('Oriental Phonograph Mfg. Co., Ltd.') (8)
later became Toyo Chikuonki Goshi-gaisha
(Oriental Gramophone & Co., Ltd.)
Head Office: Kyoto Prefecture
Products: a) Gramophone & Musical Instrument
b) Disc: Orient Record
c) Miscellaneous goods
Fate: In 1919 merged into No. 2.

1919 or 1920:
Teikoku Chikuonki Shokai (9)
(Strangely 4 kinds can be found; 'Imperial Graphophone Co.', 'Imperial Graphone Co.', 'Imperial Phonograph Co.' & 'Teikoku Chikuonki Co.'.)
Head Office: Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefcture
Products: a) Gramophones (see Photo No. 5)
b) Discs: Hikoki Record, Teichiku Record & Sphinx Record
Fate: In 1925 combined as No. 16

Fig 5 Trikoku's product with a drawer as cabinet, black japanned

Fig 6 Sutandaado's

1920: **Sutandaado Chikuonki Kabushiki-kaisha** (Standard Gramophone Co., Ltd.) (10)
Products: gramophone (detail unknown, see Photo No. 6)
Fate: In 1925 combined as No. 16

Nitto Chikuonki Kabushiki-kaisha (Nitto Gramophone Co., Ltd.) (11)
Head Office: Osaka Prefecture(?)
Products: a) Gramophones
:b) Nitto Records: 78's & long playing disc (12"), equivalents to World Record
Fate: Merged into Dainippon Chikuonki Kabushiki-kaisha (see No. 14)

1921: **Toa Chikuonki Kabushiki-kaisha** ('Toa Phone Co., Ltd.') (12)
Head Office: Hyogo Prefecture
Products: Toa Record (others unknown)
Fate: short lived

Asahi Chikuonki Shokai (Asahi Gramophone & Co.) (13)
Record: Disc with a crane bird mark label

Naigai Chikuonki Shokai (Naigai Gramophone & Co.) (14)
Head Office: Hyogo Prefecture
Products and history: a) Production of Naigai Record
b) Later became Taihei Chikuonki Kabushiki-kaisha ('Taihei Gramophone Co., Ltd.'), in ca. 1935 became Dainippon Chikuonki Kabushiki-kaisha ('Dainippon Gramophone Co., Ltd') and then merged Nitto Record (see No. 11). Last moment of this company is not known.

1923: **Sankodo Kabushiki-kaisha** (Sankodo Co., Ltd.) (15)
Head Office: Osaka City(?)
History: Originally started in 1889 as importer dealt with mostly American Columbia products and then Lyrophone Werke's products (gramophones & Lyrophone Record) from Germany, etc. In 1923 reorganized as domestic manufacturer and in 1925 combined into No. 16.
Products: a) Gramophones (horn and hornless types) (see Photo No. 7)
b) Discs: Starkton, made by Lyrophone Werke, Germany Menophone, etc.

Fig 7 Sankodo's

1925: **Godo Chikuonki Kabushiki-kaisha** (Combined Gramophone Co., Ltd.) (16)
Above 4 manufacturers, Nos. 5, 9, 10 & 15 were combined and named this, which was the final company established in Japan in acoustic era and continued till 1932.

1927: **'Victor Talking Machine Company of Japan, Ltd.'** (17)
Head Office: Yokohama City, Kanagawa, Prefecture
Business: a) Gramophones: At first, importation of Orthophonic Victrolas from American Victor, Camden, N.J. After 1929 partial domestic production of Victrola 1-90 and after 1930 entirely domestic 1-90 (called J1-90) and entirely domestically designed 1-80 appeared on market.
b) Records: At first importation and pressing from imported stampers, and after 1928 entirely domestic ones appeared on market.

1928: **'Columbia Graphophone Co., Of Japan, Ltd.'** (18)
Head Office: Tokyo City
Business: Similar to the case of Victor above, English Columbia products, Viva-tonal Grafonolas and laminated records were gradually produced domestically, in parallel with importation.

Some years later, numerous manufacturers appeared till Sino-Japanese War occured in 1937, but these products were largely influenced by the ones of Nos. 17 & 18, except few creative ones in ca. 1935. Then, beginning of the Dark Ages, W.W.II completely prohibited these industries.

Conclusively I can briefly say as follows:

1) The 1st domestic manufacturer, Nichibei Chikuonki Seizo Kabushiki-kaisha (No. 1) was depending on 6 American directors & American technology. This and the other ones I listed above were always followers to Western products and creative products can not always be seen.
2) During this period, the Nihon Chikuonki Shokai (No. 2) was constantly leading for others and renamed Columbia Graphophone Co., of Japan, Ltd. at the beginning of electric age.
3) Though some importers dealt with products for vertical-cut or dual-cut like Edison, Pathe, Brunswick & Cheney, etc., domestic products were exclusively for lateral-cut, except No. 7.
4) The function of these domestic ones were very inferior to those of imported items, though some machines are superbly finished and collector's pieces. For example, the cabinet of No. 9 I have is beautifully black japanned like a piano (see Photo No. 5).
5) I, as a collector, am rather interested in some hand-made ones in acoustic era, which will be introduced by me in this magazine in the near future.

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The Edison Lateral-cut Records

BY PAUL COLLENETTE.

Edison Diamond Discs, though familiar to most collectors, are not all that common in England, but Edison lateral-cut records must be distinctly rare. They were put out only shortly before Edison ceased production of records and phonographs in November 1929, and it is thought that these records were never marketed here.

The records are different (for Edison!) in several respects apart from their lateral cut.

1 They are made of a rather soft composition, rather similar to Pathe records. They are thin, not laminated, and are prone to warping, or in other words normal to anyone but Edison.
2 The groove is exceptionally wide. The pitch is normal for lateral records.
3 The label bears the caption "electric" and has large flashes of lightning in the design to emphasize the fact (which was not mentioned on the diamond discs).
4 Speed was 78.8 rpm, not 80.
5 They were produced also in the 12" size — the only Edison records apart from the LPs to be so done.
6 The records were not pressed by Edison but by contractors in New York. Can anyone tell me who?

When played with a suitably large stylus, the fidelity is quite astonishingly good, and there is a high signal-to-noise ratio. There is slightly over-heavy bass, but this was of course normal practise in the early years of electrical recording. (No doubt the engineers liked to play with their new toys.)

The first "needle" records were released in mid-August 1929 and indeed out-numbered the new diamond discs. In the first release there were thirty titles, mostly dance bands and popular vocalists. There were also however two "Gold Seal" records, twelve inch size, by Mario Basiola and Martinelli, at S2, as opposed to the others at 75c. The launching of the new records was accompanied by the usual advertisers' hyperbole:

Edison Needle-Type Records in their sleeves

"Every day horizons are widening. Newspapers tell of accomplishments that were considered dreams yesterday. It's getting harder and harder to find anything really startling. But here's something to stir the imagination of everybody. Edison invades the needle record field! Edison recording quality is now available to the whole world! What a whale of an opportunity for every record dealer who thinks — and acts!"

At the same time Edison began marketing machines to play the lateral records, that would not (unlike their radiograms) play diamond discs. These were two models of a portable design, and were almost certainly made under contract for Edison (possibly to their design). The P1 is shewn in the picture. The P2 was slightly smaller, had a motor that played only two records with one winding, was nickel instead of gold finish, and had a price of $25.

By September it appears that Edison had discontinued vertical-cut recording in favour of lateral, which indicates a decision to abandon diamond discs in advance of the complete closure. Diamond discs recorded earlier were still however being released.

The tenth, and last, weekly release, list was for 18th October 1929. There were just two issues, by the dance bands Arthur Fields and his Assasinators (one hopes that it was not the music that they assasinated) and the California Ramblers. The latter was a superlative dance band which recorded for very many labels, and which had been more usually known as the Golden Gate Orchestra on diamond discs and Blue Amberols. Neither of these records were in fact among the last to be recorded. Sadly, as it now seems, this list bears the announcement;

"Coming! A smashing Edison Record Hit!
An Extra Special Release — too big to announce on this sheet, so we are sending you a special letter. This letter will tell you about the record — about the many tie-ups which will help you sell it — about the special advertising campaign that will put it over the top. It's a big thing for Edison dealers.
When you get the full story, you'll be rarin' to go. Watch for the special letter!"

Alas the special letter was not to be delivered. The total number of titles issued had been 160 on 10" and 11 on 12". The number of unissued matrices is probably around 1000, not counting re-takes.

The background to the "needle-type electric" records, as Edison termed them, is this. While the early 1920s had been very successful years for the Edison record business (their peak sales being in 1922), by around 1925 trade was flagging because the power of the competitor's advertising had overtaken Edison's early impact with the Tone Tests. And finally they had a major benefit which Edison lacked — electric recording.

Edison would have nothing to do with electric recording. He complained that he had found in his telegraph experiments that electricity caused distortion, and that anyway his acoustic process, developed empirically and exhaustively over many years, had been vindicated by the highly successful Tone Tests. His sons, and managers at the plant, saw their livelihood disappearing, and reminded him that things had changed a bit since the 1870s....

By 1926 the drop in business was getting serious. So the 20 and 40-minute Long Playing records were introduced; not as is generally thought as a technical triumph, but as a sales gimmick to stimulate business. Sadly, as a result of uninspired music cobbled together, the faint volume and indifferent reproduction, and groove wear, the project was a failure. (It was almost a repeat performance of the introduction of wax Amberols in 1908 — evidently the lesson of 18 years before had not been learned.) The disjointed selections of music and the inability of machines to play the records through without winding seemed to negate the whole point of the records' long-playing feature. (To my mind it is surprising that the LPs, reproducers and attachments ever reached the market — it must have been something of a panic decision.)

The next "life saver" for the Edison record business had to be electric recording. Walter Miller, for years the chief recording engineer, had conducted experiments in electric

recording (and radio) unknown to Edison. When the ubiquitous old man discovered this, there was a big scene and Miller almost resigned. By the summer of 1927 electric diamond discs were being put on the market, together with the heavier "Edisonic" reproducer which played them to better advantage. The latter was a refinement of the "Dance Reproducer" of 1926, which although successful in meeting the demand for more volume — a necessity where there was a crowd dancing — was rather strident in tone. At this time a new line of phonographs, also named "Edisonic", with larger horn, was launched.

It was clear, however, by 1928 that the unique format of the diamond discs meant that they were doomed, in spite of their undoubted technical superiority. Thus the company went into the radio and radiogram market, producing some superlative models. Their quality was endoresed by independent experts in the trade journals, but they pointed out that the price too was superlative. A special pickup was developed which had a permanent diamond for the Diamond Discs but which also accepted steel needles to play other companies' records.

Again, secret experiments were carried out, this time into a lateral-cut electric recording process. (Mr Edison, by then a very old man, would have been heart-broken by this and it is thought that he never knew about the lateral records).

So from about April 1928, duplicate lateral-cut recordings were taken of most of the sessions at the Edison New York studios. It seems that the lateral-cut lathe was fed by the same signal as the Diamond Disc machine, so that the takes are the same. But with the Diamond Discs, alternative takes were issued due to the peculiarity of the pressing process which was more like the baking of treacle tarts. On the other hand, with the laterals, only one matrix was used for production.

Not all sessions from April 1928 were recorded by both processes simultaneously. At first many were still only vertically recorded, but at the very end some sessions were lateral only, including the last of all. Very occasionally the same titles by the same artists were made over on separate occasions. The usual method of twin recordings was obviously to save this expense — one imagines that at certain times perhaps a particular studio/equipment/engineer was temporarily unavailable, which necessitated a recall. So unlike the Blue Amberols after 1914 and the LPs, Edison laterals are direct recordings. Nevertheless, I should very much like to hear from any collector who has both types of record of the same item.

The largest series was the 14XXX block (87 issues) which were mostly dance bands. The next largest was the 11XXX series (53 issues) which were mostly light orchestral and vocal. Little serious music was recorded, but there were 7 issued in an operatic series, on 12-inch discs at the higher price of S2. There were plans for grander things, but they did not materialize.

The last recording session for commercial issue was on 18 October 1929, by the excellent dance band directed by Mel Morris, the Piccadilly Players. The record however was never issued. The next day a private recording was made for the General Manager of the phonograph division, and the studio in New York was then closed. The company did however continue to make recordings elsewhere of transcription material for radio stations (has any reader got an example?), for a further year.

The Edison company also planned to produce transcription apparatus and records for use in cinemas. 1929 was the rush year for the "talkies" and thousands of cinemas were wiring for sound, creating a sudden demand for this equipment. This did not reach the production stage, though.

All this demonstrates that the phonograph division of Thomas A. Edison Inc was far from moribund when they ceased production in November 1929. After the Wall Street crash, there was just no demand for radiograms costing S 1000 or more, and it was necessary to abandon that volatile trade in order to preserve the more stable parts of the Edison business. In fact Edison was the longest-lasting of the "big three" in its original ownership. (Columbia —

the American Graphophone Co — had been the victim of financial manoevering in 1921 which had thrown it into bankruptcy and new ownership, and Eldridge Johnson had sold out his controlling share in Victor to a group of bankers in 1928). So the departure of Edison from the entertainment recording industry was hardly the ignominious retreat it was at the time (and still occasionally is today) made out to be. Indeed, for another 30 years the company still produced dictating machines, which for Edison had been the original purpose of the phonograph.

My thanks are due to the following who have assisted with information and loan of material:

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Some notes on the Symphony Orchestras of London encountered in the Record Catalogues

BY GEORGE FROW

The first orchestral recordings made in London were all light items by the Hotel Cecil Orchestra, and the Trocadero and Alhambra Orchestras on Berliner, and these are a little outside the scope of these notes.

The earliest professional London orchestra that comes within the range of recording was that at the Crystal Palace, formed in 1855 from double-handed players of the Crystal Palace Band, plus a few extra string players, and conducted by the German-born August Manns. Whereas it is unlikely there were any recordings by this orchestra – it disbanded in 1900 – some of its principals certainly made records at the turn of the century and after, and these included Edward Dubrucq, L. W. Hardy, Eli Hudson and F. Seidel.

The Queen's Hall Orchestra, some 88 strong, became a permanent professional body for the inauguration of the Promenade Concerts in August 1895 under the conductorship of Henry J. Wood, and this seems to be the first British symphony orchestra to be associated with record making, or at least some of it, as Edison Bell issued 2-minute brown wax cylinders by "Members of the Queen's Hall Orchestra" from the mid-nineties.

This orchestra was initially privately supported by Robert Newman, and when in 1901 he ran into difficulties, Sir Edgar Speyer assumed the responsibility. Speyer was of German birth, and he left London for abroad after the outbreak of the Great War, having spent £30,000 in the upkeep of the orchestra, a large sum in those days. William Boosey failed to come to terms on its title, and it became known as the *New* Queen's Hall Orchestra, and is thus recognised by record collectors on British and American Columbias of the twenties; Chappell's wound up this orchestra in March 1927 when times were bad, but it continued as Sir Henry Wood and his Symphony Orchestra when the B.B.C. assumed the organisation of the Promenade Concerts in the August. This orchestra eventually merged into the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra in October 1930 under Dr. (now Sir) Adrian Boult, and whom one is pleased to report as still conducting in his ninetieth year, although restricting himself to studio and recording performances.

The name of the Queen's Hall Orchestra was revived in 1935, and under Sir Henry Wood provided the music to a film called "Calling the Tune", which dealt with the gramophone from its inception, and which could certainly be revived for the benefit of this Society! Again under Wood, this Queen's Hall Orchestra made a batch of records for Decca, and it participated finally in half a dozen concerts held in Queen's Hall in 1936.

The name of New Queen's Hall *Light* Orchestra was first used in H.M.V. recordings conducted by Alick Maclean from 1919 and later for Columbia records conducted by Eric Coates, John Ansell, Percy Pitt and others, and this name in part was revived after the last war as the Queen's Hall Light Orchestra for Columbia and Decca records, playing in particular a descriptive type of light music popular at the time. Its conductors included Charles Williams, Eric Coates and Sidney Torch, and it had no connection with the Queen's Hall, which was totally destroyed in the big London raid of May 10th, 1941.

But earlier in its career the Queen's Hall Orchestra had led to the formation of yet another one; one of the practices that had harmed the London, and British orchestras in general was that of deputies, when regular members who attended rehearsals often sent along substitutes for the actual concert if there was another lucrative opening to be filled outside, and this naturally led to indifferent performances and annoyed visiting conductors who were not accustomed to these goings-on. In 1904 it was announced that deputies in the Queen's Hall Orchestra would not be allowed, and most of its members resigned, protesting that the orchestra could not offer them enough work to keep them throughout the year, and as a result formed the London Symphony Orchestra on co-operative lines, giving its first concert in May 1904.

To the same decade belongs the Beecham Symphony Orchestra, whose records appeared on H.M.V. and Columbia. It was founded by Sir Thomas in 1909, and after inaugural Queen's Hall concerts was chiefly employed in Beecham's famous presentations of opera at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. It seems to have ceased activities in 1913-4.

A third orchestra of that decade was the New Symphony Orchestra, which was born in 1905. It was formed by the flautist Eli Hudson, violinist John Saunders and Charles Draper the clarinettist, and derived its foundation from the old Crystal Palace Orchestra, which although disbanded in 1900, had been partially reconstituted on occasions since, to meet concert and oratorio requirements at the Crystal Palace. The New Symphony Orchestra made its first appearance in the October at the Coronet Theatre, Notting Hill Gate, London; this theatre is still there. Sir Thomas Beecham was appointed conductor-in-chief in 1906, but severed relations after two years, Landon Ronald agreeing to take Beecham's place in 1909.

In 1915 the name "Royal Albert Hall Orchestra" was adopted for all occasions on which the New Symphony Orchestra appeared in that building and in 1920 permission was granted for use of the name for all appearances of the orchestra, whether in the Albert Hall or not. When C. B. Cochran went into management of the Albert Hall this privilege was revoked, but study of his auto-biography does not reveal the dates. However as a pointer, the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra, a prolific recorder on the H.M.V./Victor label, reverted to the New Symphony Orchestra at the end of 1928, according to record catalogues.

The New Symphony Orchestra, however, had the fistinction of being the first symphony orchestra to engage in a contract with a record company (H.M.V.), and in 1924 was the first to have a full concert programme broadcast by the British Broadcasting Company.* The orchestra, as the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra, under Sir Landon Ronald, was also the first to record a symphony electrically in 1925. (H.M.V. D 1037-41, Tchaikowsky's 4th).

Reference to the H.M.V. catalogue will show the great extent to which the New Symphony/Royal Albert Hall Orchestra was used, and some of the milestone recordings achieved by prominent conductors; one thinks particularly of Elgar with the New Symphony Orchestra and some of these records are still in the British catalogue today in transferred form.

The orchestra of the Royal Philharmonic Society, which made many early Columbia records, ceased to exist at the end of the 1931-2 season, although this name was revived in an orchestra raised by Sir Thomas Beecham immediately after the last war, and exists today. Following the closure of the earlier R.P.O. the London Philharmonic Orchestra was established by Sir Thomas Beecham and wealthy backers in the autumn of 1932 with the hope that the gramophone companies would use it for all orchestral recordings; in fact although this ideal was by no means achieved, the L.P.O. gained a fair share of recording outlet, as well as securing work from the Royal Philharmonic Society, and a number of regular concerts.

The British Symphony Orchestra was a recording unit for H.M.V. in the early twenties under Dr. Adrian Boult, and came up again in 1931 on the Columbia label, conducted by such as Oscar Fried,

**British Broadcasting Company Limited became British Broadcasting Corporation on January 1st, 1927.*

Weingartner, Walter, Ethel Smyth and Sir Henry Wood, and this must have been a general pseudonym, since the original name of British Symphony Orchestra was used in 1919 by Raymond Roze, who founded an orchestra to give employment to soldies returning from the Great War, but this worthy ambition petered out after a season or two, when it foundered through lack of support. Of the British Symphony Orchestra Columbia records between mid-1931 and 1933, two stayed in the catalogue to become best sellers. These were DX 311, Toy Symphony, conducted Weingartner, and DX 475, Air on the G String, conducted Wood, which disappeared in 1954 and 1955 respectively.

Another similar venture to give employment was launched by Serge Krish after the talking pictures had put cinema musicians out of work, and this was the New Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, whose records appeared on the Broadcast, Imperial and Rex labels. Krish died last April aged ninety.

There have always existed a number of "personal" orchestras of greater or lesser magnitude, sometimes assembled for a series of concerts or for recording needs, and many of these are on the periphery of our subject. However, among the symphony orchestras was one conducted by Eugene Goossens in 1921, and revived in 1929, another by Boyd Neel from June 1933, others by Reginald Jacques and John Barbirolli, and most if not all of these are well known on several labels to British collectors. The London Chamber Orchestra of Anthony Bernard was formed in 1921, merged in 1928 with the New English Music Society and recorded for early Decca, even under the label of the New English Symphony Orchestra. The later London Chamber Orchestra was reconstituted in 1942-3, and thereafter contributed for many years to Decca label.

Percy Pitt was appointed musical director of the British Broadcasting Company in 1922; earlier he had been organist and accompanist at the Queen's Hall, then from 1902 musical advisor at Covent Garden, and later musical director for the Grand Opera Syndicate there. He was later to be described by Stuart Hibbard, chief B.B.C. announcer, as short and tubby and inclined to bury his head in the score, coming up now and then to breathe. Until 1930 Pitt organised various orchestras or combinations round the Wireless Symphony Orchestra and B.B.C. Studio Orchestra and a number of notable musicians were invited to conduct. It is significant that the B.B.C. did not use its own orchestra when it took over the Promenade Concerts in 1927, but employed the Henry Wood Orchestra until 1930. By 1929 heavy criticism of the Wireless Symphony Orchestra in the musical press influenced the formation of the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra in the following year from the Henry Wood Symphony Orchestra and the nucleus of the Studio Orchestra. The Columbia and Regal recordings of the B.B.C. Wireless Symphony Orchestra under Percy Pitt were made from 1925 to 1930 and will be found adequate for their time, though hardly sparkling, although one record of Tannhauser extracts lasted until 1954 in the Columbia lists.

At this distance it is becoming difficult to break through the defences of the pseudonyms without deep research, and there is a great deal that will one day be done by somebody, not only on early individual performers, singers and comedians in particular, but orchestras, as has been shown; however the record companies are still pursuing the pseudonym policy, "The National Symphony Orchestra" has been a name on record for the past fifty years, but there is a suspicion that this name has even appeared on London concert posters. "The Grand Symphony Orchestra" which appeared so regularly in 78 days has its modern counterpart in "The Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra", no doubt all for the sake of a contract, but making things devilish hard for the researcher.

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The Edison Invention

PRESENTED FALSELY BY J.L. YOUNG AND THE 'PHONO TRADER AND RECORDER', JANUARY 1907

PART II by Frank Andrews

During the period in which the foregoing correspondence was being published in "The Talking Machine News", one of the correspondents, viz., J. Lewis Young, was running a series of articles in the rival "The Phono Trader and Recorder" under the heading of "The History of Talking Machines".

Unlike your present writer, Young was a highly qualified man, being a Bachelor of Science and a Member of the Institute of Telegraph Engineers who had served his apprenticeship under Wheatstone. He claimed to be the first to sell entertainment cylinders to the public in London in 1893. I have already written other details about him in the earlier paragraphs.

I cannot give the whole text of what was published in January 1907, which was a continuation of his narrative begun in 1906, but to get to the essentials of the "false presentation of the facts" I must pick him up at the point where he says, — "The claims of Edison and Cros have been subjected to judicial determination, and Edison has been declared the prior inventor". This was not enlarged upon.

We find that the first of Edison's phonographs was patented in this country on the 30th July 1877, patent No. 2909."

"This patent deals principally with the subject of controlling by sound the transmission of electric currents, and the reproduction of corresponding sounds at a distance". Now we all know that the phonograph had not yet been built by Kreusi for Edison, that at July 1877, Edison had no conception of a machine which was to be the first phonograph. But immediately under the explanation of the principle of th patent of 1877, there is depicted the phonograph of November 1877, constructed four months after the date of the "first patent for an Edison phonograph." He then quotes sheet 2, figure 29 of the patent, but this material was not added to the patent's specification until after the idea of building the tin foil phonograph had arisen. As "A.L." of Blackpool put it in his letter of December 1906, which I repeat, "It is a curious thing if it be regarded as a real phonograph patent that nothing is said in it in reference to the registering or reproduction of speech. True the phonograph principle is indicated in it, but had it been really then discovered it seems invonveivable that so important a matter would not have been especially and particularly referred to".

Young, in his January article, does say that the phonograph only became an actuality in November 1877, but his use of the picture of the tin-foil phonograph, and his quotation from the later addition to the patent, after it had been invented, is so presented that one is led to believe that Edison had already invented his machine by July 1877, and that it was just a matter of building it and making it work!

"Now, I knew Kreusi, and I personally asked him all about it. He told me he made the first machine at Mr. Edison's request, but he thought Edison was out of his mind, and when he had actually made it, and he and Edison tried it, no one was more surprised at the result than himself".

"As I before stated, Edison did not think very much of it except as a philosophical toy, but the possibilities of the invention ...."

"I have had the original phonograph in my hands, many times, and it was presented to the British nation by Edison, and is now at the Patent Office Museum, at South Kensington."

Another misrepresentation of the facts by Young occurred where he wrote "... and there is no doubt that if Edison had not actually accomplished in practice the theory of Mr. Cros, the latter would have materialized his theories into an actual machine."

Unfortunately for Mr. Cros, he had no Industrial Laboratory as Edison had — but what did Mr. Young mean by saying that Edison had put Cros' theories into practice? In what way did the tin-foil phonographs resemble Cros' instructions for a recording and reproducing process?

Remember, J.L. Young was a highly respected figure in the industry and there were few who could contradict him and point out those passages in his work where he "drew the longbow!"

The rest of his contribution in January was devoted to a masterly account of Edison's very comprehensive British Patent of 1878, No. 1644. For those of you who have "From Tin Foil to Stereo" you will find the original specification set out therein.

Because he had been litigated against in 1893 by Edison Bell under their rights in the Bell-Tainter patents, Young had left no stone unturned to try and prove that the wax-cutting patent had been "anticipated" by Edison in his No. 1644 patent. He failed to argue his case and lost by non-appearance but he held to his point of view for many years afterwards, and so it was in that January of 1907 that he finished his instalment of "The History of Talking Machines"; "... and as the modern Talking Machine has developed by reason of the use of wax or wax-like blanks on which to make the masters, and the process of cutting in contradistinction to indenting, I should like to ask if removing is not cutting or gouging, and I cannot see how Edison could have put into this patents the words, 'The indenting point does not become clogged with parrafin in consequence of the intervening foil', if he had not tried it and found it really was so?"

At the risk of hammering the point too much, I must point out that Young conveniently ignored the fact that Edison's indenting method itself was being spoiled by the indenting point when it was used on wax alone, and the covering of the wax was to make the indenting method efficient. Edison was not genius enough, at that particular time, to envisage that perhaps actually cutting into the wax was the answer to his problem and nobody can blame him for not appreciating the possibilities of cutting, but to suggest that Edison had discovered the gouging or cutting method when he in fact proceeded to find a way to eliminate such removal of wax, is ludicrous, – but Young was not prepared to give up on this after holding his views for the previous thirteen years. He promised to deal more fully with the matter in his next instalment.

And so we had the views of Young for a second time within a few months. An entrenched pro-Edison position in which indenting was almost synomymous with engraving, cutting or gouging!

It is therefore no surprise to read that Young, in February 1907 writes; "... the word used to denote the actual method of making the record is 'indenting'. I am not so sure but that this word does not, even now, more fully describe what happens in record making than the word 'cutting', "....."

My comment upon that is that whatever might be construed by "indenting" in 1907, I know I would be in trouble at my place of employment if I were to use indenting methods in producing industrial diamond tools where the specifications in the workshop drawings call for cutting, engraving, or gouging! I use all four methods of shaping material and it would not do for me to argue semantics with my employer if I preferred to use one procedure in preference to another, arguing that the words meant all the same thing!

Correspondence and argument broke out spasmodically during the ensuing years, generating a lot of heat, but not much light.

J.L. Young's claim that he joined the Edison Phonograph business in London in 1887, seems to be based on the fact that he joined Colonel G. Gouraud in that year, but as he says Edison had not produced his new style phonograph until December 1887, it was hardly likely that there was any Edison Phonograph business in London before January 1888.

Young says he was officially informed that the apparatus was completed in November 1887 and in the April 1907 issue of "The Phono Trader and Recorder" he published a letter received in London from Edison, dated Nov. 16, 1887, which read;

"New phonograph is a darling; the talking is perfect. I get the whispering fair, but shall get whispering perfect; today had boy (Hamilton) read off one page of "History of Maryland". "Bachelor" was sent for, and got every word. The "Scientific American" artist and reporter was over yesterday. I read 500 words from the "World", the artist never saw a phonograph before. He got 85 per cent, the first time and all but one word the second time.

"Have solved the mailing – viz., the drum of the phonograph is one piece, 4 inches long, with a taper of 1/8 inch.

"You can slip a full-sized cylinder over this or a half-size, 2 inches long, or a quarter-size 1 inch long. You slide it along until it fits the taper of the phonograph drum. Hence we shall furnish four sizes of phonograms – all the same diameter, but sifferent lengths, 1,2,3 and 4 inches.

"You remember the old style wooden (round) match-box made from pine? I use these for making boxes. Automatic machines have been used for years to make these. They cost a mere nothing; are very stiff, and very light.

"The postage stamp is pasted at joint 1 and 2, (see Fig. 2) – (There were three drawings with the letter – F.A.) The opening of box cancels stamp; the address is a round thin gummed label; when too many labels have accumulated on box by, say, twenty interchanges, the office boy pares them off with a knife.

"Now if you study this thing you will find this the only practicable method. A long tube will get bent, a flat plate cannot be practical. They throw heavy things on mail bags – walk on them.

"The pine box is so stiff it never will be broken, and is the cheapest of all known methods. I think they have machines in Norway to make them, they have here, at any event, and could be bought and sent to Norway.

"The present method of making the phonogram itself I have adopted is thus:- (Fig. 3 was referred to — F.A.) The plaster of Paris is moulded. It sets hard, is cheap, is not changed by moisture, expands very little, and the fit is absolute perfection, as the metallic moulds are all alike and the cylinder had an absolutely accurate taper so as to fit every phonograph cylinder.

"I have now worked the three cells of battery (Edison-Lalande) three weeks, seven hours a day, and they show no weakening as yet. They are progressing well at the factory. Three-quarters of the tools are done, and I wouldn't be surprised if I could send you half-a-dozen machines and big supply phonogram blanks by December 20 to 25. I shall send Hamilton over with them. He will give you all the points. I have the duplication process for cylinders pretty well worked up. (Signed) Edison."

Young commented, "It will be noticed that Edison's mind was fully occupied in devising his new phonograph for the purpose of inter-communication and to this end the whole of Edison's genious was devoted."

By November 1913, when J.L. Young was interviewed on the subject of who introduced the phonograph to Britain, and the Edison Standard cylinder record and the wax Amberol record had come and gone, Mr. Young was a lot less enthusiastic over the phonograph than he had been!

"The tin-foil phonograph was a nine day's wonder. The record could only be used a few times and then became ineffective."

"The phonograph lay moribund until 1886, when Edison seems to have revived his interest in the apparatus. His opponents — the Volta Graphophone Company, (with which company is identified the Columbia Phonograph Company) — claim that they set the initiative in using wax for the recording surface, and that Edison took the "tip" from them and proceeded to "improve" his machine in the line of using wax.

"Knowing what I now do, and in the experience of 28 years in the business, I can believe that the talking machine industry has been, and is, carried on, in the main, by manufacturers appropriating one another's ideas."

"I joined Gouraud in 1887. He had a contract with Edison by which he became the sole selling agent for Edison's "New" phonograph for the whole of the world except the United States and Canada."

"I had a 20 per cent interest in the business ...."

"Personally I gave several hundred lectures, receiving in fees anything from ten guineas to one hundred guineas, every penny of which went to pay the patent fees."

"I may here mention, incidentally, that Gouraud, after we had been five years "booming" Edison and the phonograph, sold out his interest to a company for shares which, by the way, have never been worth the paper they were written on, and I, at Edison's suggestion, left the business and never received one farthing for my work or investment."

Young concluded this 1913 interview with, — "When one reads this interview one will be inclined to say, 'How is it Edison is not on top in the talking machine business? All I can say is he has had more booming in the Press, at no cost to himself, than all the other talking machine people have paid for. The fact is, in an American phrase, he does not seem capable of keeping abreast of the times and delivering the goods. Edison wrote an article nearly thirty years ago on the future of his phonograph, which appeared in the North American Review, which may have been a phantasy; certainly he has never lived up to it, and, as he is now getting on in years, I am afraid his dreams will never come true. Personally, I wish I had never seen the phonograph because, through it, I got side-tracked, and I look back upon a life which has been full of "sound and fury" but has brought only an empirical award which Emerson puts it as 'having done it'."

Did I hear someone say, "Sour Grapes!"

One last contribution, from 1909, in which Gaisberg of the Gramophone Co. Ltd., had been a correspondent, the subject matter being the first gramophone.

I am quoting from "A.L. of Blackpool's" letter, in which he acknowledges that Gaisberg was right in correcting himself by stating that the Franklin Institute was in Philadelphia, and not in Washington. A.L.'s letter then went on to contain this;—

"Berliner, in an old lecture on the Gramophone, referring to the first invention or discovery of the talking machine, said, in reference to Mr. Charles Cros, that subtle French thinker and reasoner: 'The fact remains that to Mr. Charles Cros belongs the honour of having first suggested the idea of and feasible plan for mechanically reproducing speech, once uttered. This statement has never been challenged since it was first made'. How different is this generous recognition of truth by so great a worker in this field to that of

many Americans, who, not content with Edison's excellent share in the work, do all they know to take from Mr. Cros the honour that is his just due, largely relying on the lapse of time to make their statements appear true; and, also, the constant belittlement of other great workers in the art."

Alfred Lomax, (whom I guess "A.L." to be) then goes on to other matters.

I hope I have shown, by these selections from letters and articles, that there is a whole history of argument and controversy surrounding the early inventions of the talking machine, and that echoes of those controversies are still heard in some of the more modern treaties on the subject. I venture to suggest that if the protagonists in the early days had only taken the trouble to define their terms when they asked such (what appear to be) simple questions as, "Who invented the talking machine", or "Who invented the phonograph", or had even considered whether the use of the word "THE" was at all the apt one to use, then perhaps the facts of the matter would have caused much less argument.

Is there an agreed body of opinion, in this day and age, which apportions merit to those to whom it is justly due, or do we still have a caucus of opinion which holds, to put it into the vernacular, "I don't care what you say, Edison invented the talking machine?"

What do you think? — Or don't you care?

'Who's your lady friend?'

REPORT OF A PROGRAMME HEARD ON RADIO 4 IN JULY, WRITTEN BY BRIAN HAYNES AND PRODUCED BY BRIAN COOKE.

The subject was the career of Harry Fragson, music-hall comedian of the Edwardian era. His best-known song, still popular today is "Hello, hello! Who's your lady friend?" He was born Leon Philippe Pot in Richmond Surrey, in July 1869 of a Belgian father. The name became anglicised to "Potts", and everybody called him "Harry". How he later adopted the name "Fragson" is to this day a mystery.

His father wanted Harry to follow his trade of yeast merchant, but Harry had other ideas. He had been able to mimic from an early age, and took easily to music too. In 1885 he went for an audition to the Middlesex Music Hall, but the manager was shocked at the idea of a piano on the stage. However, Harry happened to hear a French comedian, and found how easily he could imitate him.

He decided to go to Paris, almost penniless. He called at the offices of Le Figaro, and so impressed the manager that he was invited to a private dinner-party, where he met Yvette Guilbert and the actor Coquelin. Coquelin introduced him to La Gigale, where he did very well for a few weeks, but engagements fell off. Almost penniless again, he encountered an English woman, worse off than he, who begged a few coppers. Harry emptied his pockets. Years later, they were to meet in happier days at the London Tivoli.

By 1892 Harry was doing very well in France, but a cloud hung over him. He was visiting a medical school, and saw a body in the dissecting room. He was quite upset, and could see himself in that position, as if he had a presentiment that he would die at an early age. Meanwhile he was getting engagements at the Black Cat Cabaret and the Folies Bergeres, but he was still unknown in England. His French with a Cockney accent went down well with the Parisians. He wrote many French songs, some of which are still popular today.

In 1905 he was still at the Folies, but he came to Drury Lane for the Christmas pantomime, where he received rave notices. A song he wrote for this show, Whispers of Love, afterwards became popular, and he recorded it for Pathe. This was played. One of his comic songs Paper-bag Cookery was also played. This was not Pathe, probably HMV.

On 12th June 1906 he went to a party in celebration of Ellen Terry's jubilee, and there met Caruso and Tree. He was now a regular at the Tivoli, and was a prolific omposer. He always had an obsession that his voice would fail. He was kindness and generosity itself to his fellow-artists. He was engaged for the 1908 panto, Sinbad, and for the 1907 Babes in the Wood.

By now he was commuting between London & Paris. Several of his French songs became popular, and a Pathe record of one, Je connais une Lande was played. In 1909 he was at the Alhambra Paris, whose English manager was greatly impressed.

An HMV record of his comic song, The Other Department please, was played, and mention was made of Because I Love You So, and Since Sister Mary Went to Gay Paree (both Pathe), but perhaps his best-known song, and also the last was Hello, hello! Who's Your Lady Friend? Fragson's 1913 Pathe recording of this was played.

Harry had fallen in love with a dancer from the Bal Tabarin and she came to live with him. His 83-year-old father resented the girl, perhaps afraid she would claim all his affections. Harry was at the Brighton Hippodrome for the 1913 panto, then back in Paris at the Alhambra. On returning to his flat on new year's eve, he was greeted at the front door by his father, who was brandishing a revolver, and shot him.

Back at the Alhambra W.C. Fields had just done a turn, and he related how the audience didn't believe Fragson was dead. They treated it as one of Fragson's jokes. All the boxes had been booked for the next day by Harry's friends, but when the news finally sunk in, they all stayed away. Harry had arranged a New Year party at the Bal Tabarin.

His funeral was attended by an estimated 20,000 people. The father died less than a year later in a lunatic asylum.

L.W.

On Recording Wax

While searching for other information recently in "The Gramophone Record" by H. Courtney Bryson, published 1935, I came, by chance, upon information on the wax used in recording and its technique. As this is the only reference I have ever seen to this subject, I took the following brief notes as being better than no information at all.

The author stressed that all companies and individual recorders had their own secret modifications of the basic formulae; a result of practical experience built up over the years.

The first use of wax as a recording medium was detailed in British Patent 6027–1886, by Alex-Graham Bell and Charles Sumner Tainter who used cardboard cylinders coated with a complex mixture of Stearine, soap, zinc oxide, and iron oxide, but the details and proportions of ingredients are not available. They used a sharp stylus mounted on a stiff diaphram.

As is now well-known, they offered their developments to Edison, who refused to have anything to do with them, but started work on similar lines himself. As far as can be discovered the composition of his early wax was as follows:–

Burgundy Pitch	50 per cent
Frankincense	25 per cent
Colophony	9 per cent
Beeswax	8 per cent
Olive oil	4 per cent
Water	4 per cent

The ingredients were boiled at 110 deg. c. until all the water was removed; the wax was then poured into moulds and left to set.

Upon the discovery of a moulding process and the emphasis tending towards reproduction of music rather than home recording, it became possible to use a harder wax which gave louder and more robust copies. The same type of wax was used to make disc masters. A typical formula was:–

Lead Oxide	16 per cent
Olive oil	32 per cent
Water	20 per cent
Colophony	25 per cent
Hard soap	7 per cent

The first three ingredients were heated until the water was cooked off. The remaining two were then added slowly and the whole heated until a sample dropped on a glass plate cooled to the correct consistency. The above formula was really classified as a Lead Soap.

Zinc oxide and Stearine were also in common use, an improved formula being:–

Lead Stearate (2 parts Litharge, 5 parts molten Stearic acid)

Equal parts Colophony and Paraffin Wax were added until the desired hardness was obtained. This varied somewhat according to conditions, but was soft enough to cut with a knife.

To come now to the wax used by the Gramophone Co. for disc recording.

The wax used for recording and making the copper master had to have the following properties:–

Be soft enough to cut well by the stylus and firm enough to retain the cut without any tendency to recover after the passage of the stylus.

Must not be too brittle or the blanks may break in transport.

Must take a high polish, smooth and brilliant without being greasy.

The shavings must be sufficiently tenacious to be easily drawn away by the suction gear, they should form a continuous thread. Where the shaving fractures on leaving the surface of the record a certain kind of surface noise is produced.

Must store well. Some waxes when stored at room temperature or in the wax oven become granular in structure, creating surface noise in the finished record. Other faults to watch out for are surface bloom, corroded or crystallized surface. Some waxes are affected by damp.

The manufacture of good wax blanks was so highly skilled that there were firms who specialized in the production of them especially for the smaller recording companies. A 10" wax weighed about 4 lbs. and could be shaved and used again about half a dozen times, until it was too fragile for further use.

As the recording wax was really a blend of waxes with metallic soaps, some of the more common waxes used are briefly described below:

Ceresin Wax: Extracted from Ozokerite, a dark bitumen with a melting point 60-90 deg. c., which is derived from crude petroleum. It is related to paraffin wax but is harder, and has no crystal structure. Melts at 70-80 deg. c. Soluble in alcohol. No saponification value.

Montan Wax: A bituminous product. It resembles Ozokerite, is derived from lignite, hard, tough, not as crystaline or brittle as Carnauba wax. Melts at 75-90 deg. c.
Saponification value 70-125.

Paraffin Wax: Refined from crude petroleum, lignite or shale. That obtained from shale is the best. The pure wax is hard, has semi-crystalline fracture and is more brittle than a softer grade which has a proportion of paraffin oil added. The latter grade has a cheesy feel when scratched.
Melts at 42-60 deg. c.
Soluble in Benzine. Insoluble in alcohol.

Petroleum Jelly (Vaseline): Used as a softening agent for waxes which are too hard.

Beeswax: Obtained from honeycomb by pressing from hot water, strained and bleached by sun or chemicals. It is tough, resistant to fracture, has a granular fracture. It has emulsifying properties.
Saponification 96. Melts at 64 deg. c. Insoluble in alcohol.

Carnauba Wax: Obtained by scaling the wax coating from the leaves of a South American palm. Hard and brittle, it has a faint smell of fresh hay.
Melts about 80-86 deg. c. Saponification 70-90.

Japan Wax: Obtained from the berries of a species of Rhus, shrubs or small trees. It is not a true wax but is a solid vegetable oil. On exposure to air and moisture a white powder forms on the surface.
Melts at 50-56 deg. c. Saponification 220-240.
Insoluble in cold alcohol, slightly in hot.

Shellac Wax: Obtained from Shellac, which is produced by a species of scale insect in Indian. The wax comes in two forms, one soluble in alcohol melting at 82 deg. c. and one insoluble in alcohol, melting at 74-76 deg. c. It is a hard strong wax.
Saponification 75-89.

Spermaceti: Pressed from the oil found in the head of Sperm and Bottlenosed Whales. It is a soft and crystalline wax with solvent properties which help to mix difficult waxes otherwise impossible to blend.
Melts at 44 deg. c. Saponification 125.

Stearine (Stearic Acid): Occurs in most of the harder organic fats. Usually produced from mutton or beef tallow. It has a crystalline fracture.
Melts at 69 deg. c. Soluble in warm alcohol. Saponification 205.
The usual form used in recording is a mixture of Stearic and Palmetic acid with a small quantity of Oleic acid which melts at 55 deg. c.

Aluminium Stearate: A white soap-like substance, which has variable properties according to the method of preparation. Together with Aluminium Oleate it can be produced by mixing ordinary soap with Aluminium Salts, such as the Sulphate.

In addition to the above, less commonly used waxes are Candelilla wax, Cape Berry wax and Cochin China wax.

In making up a batch, all the waxes and soaps must blend perfectly. Sometimes a few hours after manufacture a wax will become coarse and granular in texture. This is due to the separation of one of the waxes used. A good test of any two waxes is to mix solutions of the waxes together in a common solvent and observe any tendency to separate.

The soap used is a water-insoluable metallic Stearate, Lead or Sodium Stearate. The following is a typical formula for wax blanks:–

Stearine	70 per cent
Caustic Soda	1.5 per cent
Red Lead	1.5 per cent
Beeswax	12 per cent
Ceresine	10 per cent
Japan Wax	5 per cent

The Stearine is melted, and the caustic soda (in four times its own weight of distilled water) is slowly added with constant stirring. The temperature is raised to no more than 175 deg. c. in order to drive off the water. A quantity of the soap just prepared is then taken, rather more than equal to the amount of red lead, and ground together to form a smooth paste, which is then added to the soap with constant stirring. Complete reaction is shown by a colour change from red to a dirty yellow. The Ceresine, Beeswax and Japan Wax are melted together and added slowly. Finally the whole is passed through a filter press to remove all impurities, and then cast in copper or aluminium pans.

Another formula which gives good results is as follows–

Stearic Acid	37½ per cent
Caustic Soda	3 per cent
Water	9 per cent
Lead peroxide	7½ per cent
Vasaline	8 per cent
Montan wax	35 per cent

Proceed as above in the making, except that when the last ingredients are added the whole is cooked for 3 hours at 170 deg. c. instead of being filtered at once.

The following formula contains no Lead Salts.

Carnauba Wax	36 per cent
Beeswax	12 per cent
Aluminium Oleate	27 per cent
Sodium Stearate	25 per cent

All the ingredients melted together in the order given and maintained at 120 deg. c. with constant stirring for half an hour. The molten Wax is poured into the moulds, which are about 2 inches greater in diameter than the record and about 2 inches deep. The dish is cooled slowly, covered with a conical louvred metal hood to exclude dust but allow heat to escape.

The finished moulding is kept for a few days to attain stability before being trimmed in the lathe to true dimension. The centre hole is drilled either part way, to fit a pin on the recording machine, or right through to allow a centre electrode to be fitted, or a copper wire or bank is clamped round the circumference to form the electrical contact.

The final process is to "polish" the surface of the wax, really a cutting or shaving process which produces a mirror finish ready to receive the recording.

I think the most impressive aspect of this now dead craft, is that the recorder could judge his wax blank to be in such a condition as to cut clean, smooth, of the right texture and allow one continuous thread of swarf to be sucked away for the whole duration of the recording! Whacko! Only recently in a Hi Fi journal, a practitioner of Direct Cut recording was stressing the extreme difficulties of the process. He didn't have to condition his waxes before starting his recording!

Ron Hiorns

Sound Reflections and Echoes—VIII

COVERS AND SLEEVES – III

After the mighty H.M.V., which in my collection represents more the half of all the record company printed sleeves, a varied collection of 'all others' – many of them represented by a solitary example.

First some diminutive ones.

7": Only one in this size, dark blue, and printed on one side only, 'THE VICTORY electrically recorded. All the latest Songs & Dances, 6d. Long Playing Records'. A bold claim for a 7" 78, but for 2½p who's complaining!

8": ECLIPSE "Double sided Electrically Recorded – Made in England 6d. each". On the other side six labels are shown, with a legend for each: Military Bands, Vocal, Orchestral, Variety, Instrumental, Dance Music. No pretensions to the classics here.

8": BROADCAST – this is even more blatant in its advertising, with a most dubious claim to playing time: "The long playing record, Double-sided 1/3 each. Playing Duration Equal to a 10" Record...". The other side appears in two versions, one extolling the virtues of the Vocalion Portable Table Grand – Style II – New Super Model, at £4.15.0 a Gramophone of Supreme Value... Use Broadcast Needles and preserve the life of your records – 6d per box (it doesn't say how many in a box) (usually 200 – Ed.) ... Ask your dealer for a Latest List of Popular Hits". The other version lists artists – The Welsh Guards and Life Guards Bands, Symphony Orchestra, singers including John Thorne, Cavan O'Connor and Frank Titterton and Teddy Brown on the Xylophone.

I have no Unison, Radio, Plaza or 9" Crown covers.

10": BROADCAST – You've guessed it; "Playing Duration Equal to a 12" Record, 2/-". I have several of each of two types: a blue 'Super Dance' cover and a sepia one, 'The Popular Classic'. Not a logical colour scheme, as the Classic 5,000 series had blue labels and the Popular 2,000 series orange. Both have similar reverse sides, listing artists and titles in the 5,000 series.

Many companies made little attempt to be informative with their covers, which sported no more than a sales slogan. For example BRUNSWICK: "Follow the Stars on Brunswick" is all they say, using various shades of red and orange, on all my covers. I have only one CAPITOL cover (but many records), and it must date from the mid- to late-fifties, as it gives E,M.I. as the distributors (Decca had the franchise earlier). A futuristic impression of the Capitol Towers (on the U.S. west coast) is accompanied simply by the slogan "Capitol Artistes – Capital Entertainment".

COLUMBIA will merit an article to itself: so now DECCA. This large company did not put much faith in the publicity value of covers. The last simply explained "ffrr... full frequency range recording... living music". This cover was used for the entire post-war period, when Decca claimed their recording and cutting system was superior to others. (Sounds like all record companies at any time – Ed.)

Just before the war, the Decca cover was in typical 1930's style, announcing only 'Supreme Records', but an earlier one, beautifully produced in sepia, is of the 'Machines one side, repertoire the other' variety.

"Salon Decca – the musican's Instrument. The Salon Decca has a great love of music. It is an instrument that holds its breath while playing ... you do not hear the Salon Decca. You hear, instead, living music. All "Gramophone Tone" is refined away, all sense of artificiality is banished ... Ask your dealer to demonstrate the famous 'side-by-side' test and prove for yourself the superiority of Salon Decca tone." On the reverse a slurp for Decca needles and artists, including Henry Hall, Roy Fox, Hastings Municipal Orchestra, Ernst Ansermet, Orquesta Tipica Argentina and Ye Band of Rustics. Then another clever trade-mark, the letters D-E-C-C-A transcribed on to a treble clef scale.

DOMINION. Printed on soft blue paper, headed by the trade-mark Dominion Record, the second 'O' in the form of a soundbox. No slogans or A & R lists, but the addresses of their London Head Office, Luton works and depots in London, Belfast, Birmingham, Cardiff, Dublin, Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle-on-Tyne and Plymouth. A truly remarkable distribution chain, even by present-day standards.

DURIUM: these single-sided, card-based records (usually sold from news-stands) did not normally have a cover, except for those in special sets such as the Durium Easy French Language Course, in six discs. Each cover is printed with the text and an English translation of that particular record.

EMBASSY: printed plum on white, both sides the same, showing dancers and musicians in mid-fifties style, with the legend 'Music for You'. (Embassy records were sold by Woolworth's – Ed.)

IMPERIAL: The 1920's flavour comes through well here. One design, in two shades of blue, shows a girl singer and pianist on one side and a couple dancing on the other, with the slogans 'Imperial Records – Best for Song' and 'Best for Dancing' respectively. Another, printed in black on light blue, features Jack Payne and his band – all 18 of them.

ODEON: each side is similar, printed blue on white, with two simple arch-and-dome figures.

OKEH (CBS, Columbia Recording Corp.) For 35 cents the buyer may choose from 'Popular Artists, Hit Tunes, Name Bands, Folk Music, Race Records, or Hillbilly'. Artists include Gene Krupa, Count Basie, Gene Autry and many others.

PYE: this goes back to the early days of Pye in the record business, in the mid-fifties. One side carries the Pye and Nixa trade-marks, the other Mercury and EmArcy. (Polygon, also in the group at this time, is not mentioned).

PHILIPS. Like Pye, Philips entered the U.K. record market only after the last war. I have two types of cover: the earlier is blue on buff, the later black on white with blue relief. On one side, 'Records of the Century' is the slogan, on the other 'All Star Entertainment', with A & R lists including Doris Day, Frankie Lane, Rosemary Clooney, Johnnie Ray, Liberace, Jo Stafford, Tony Bennett, Guy Mitchell, Anne Shelton and 'A host of others'.

PARLOPHONE. My earliest cover of this make is mid-30's, printed black on blue, and good strong paper. "For Real Music, Parlophone Electric Records. Parlophone Needles – Scientifically made to reduce record wear. Parlophone Lindex 301 – the Perfect Soundbox for Electrical Recordings – to fit all machines. Pantophone Electrical Pick-up." Artists include Elsie & Doris Waters, Robert Naylor and, in The New Rhythm Style, Armstrong, Dorsey, Ellington, Venuti et al. The late 1930's plum cover is similar to other popular E.M.I. covers of the time. At the end of the 78 era, comes a cover printed blue on white, with the slogan "The Stars Turn on Parlophone" and a picture of a female singer and a jazz-band. On the back, microgroove records only are extolled.

REX: two bold, striking designs, each cover the same on both sides. One is sepia on buff, with a large record across the centre and the legend 'Rex Records'. The other has the familiar lion rampant and 'Rex, The King of Records'.

REGAL ZONOPHONE. Also printed brown on sepia, both sides the same. Slogans on good quality

paper: 'The Biggest Sellers' and 'The most novel and unusual in records'.

REGAL: plum and buff, both sides the same. 'Regal Records made by Columbia', and six Regal labels, overlapping and each with a different legend: Novelty records, Instrumental, Orchestral, Dance, Popular Hits, Vocal.

ZONOPHONE: last in the list, but a cover of outstanding design. The legend is 'Zonophone Record — Supreme Value — Consistent Quality.' Each of these is in one half of a marble plinth supporting the record label. Another design is broadly based on the above, but is printed on cheaper paper. 'Zonophone Records are manufactured under the supervision of the greatest experts in the industry, and embody the latest refinements of modern recording.' Another cover has circular photographs arranged diagonally of artists exclusive to Zonophone, including Jimmie Rodgers, Maurice Elwin, Megan Thomas and Esther Coleman.

An interesting point is that 10" records were a full 10 inches in diameter (or just over) up to the mid-1930's, when it shrank to 9 13/16". I believe this was due to standardization on pressing-plant plate sizes.

Finally, reverting to an earlier period, the DIAMOND DISC (hill-and-dale, but nothing to do with Edison), the cover printed black on blue. 'The record of quality — plays with a jewel — no needles required... Diamond Discs played with a jewel soundbox will outwear about 10 of any other make of record on the market, and reproduce all musical sounds with absolute fidelity.' Were they the first to use this ever-popular word?

B. Raynaud.

Dear Sir,

ALBERT ARCHDEACON

I wonder if any of your readers could provide me with any information regarding this singer, about whom I have so far been able to glean very little. He made one record for H.M.V. (or rather the Gramophone Co.), G.C. 4441, 'It was a lover and his lass' (Walthew), duet with Percevel Allen. Based on an assessment of this disc, he had a good, but unexceptional voice. He was trained at the Royal College of Music and in 1894 sang a leading role in the first English production of Delibes' opera 'Le Roi l'a Dit', staged at the College in a translation by Richard Temple (of Gilbert & Sullivan fame, hence my interest!). The ERA said of Archdeacon . . . "Mr. Albert Archdeacon was one of the most successful vocalists, and as the Marquis de Moncontour he also displayed talent as an actor."

If anyone can give any other information on his career, and say if he recorded for other labels, I should be most interested.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Walters.

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